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Making Welfare → Work

Report to Taxpayers on Welfare Reform



ONTARIO

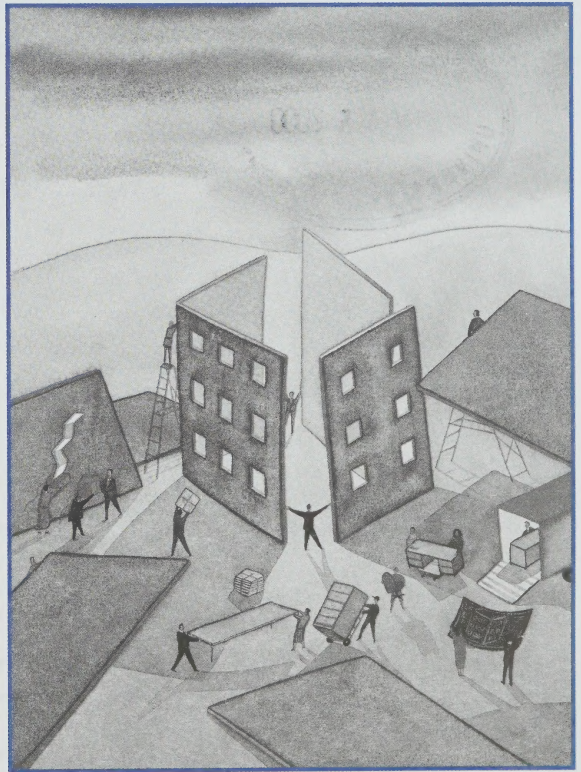


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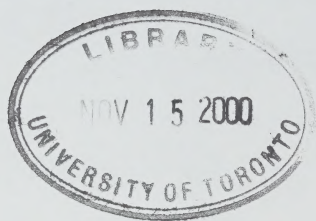
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Making Welfare → Work

Report to Taxpayers on Welfare Reform



Making Welfare Work



Report to
Taxpayers on
Welfare
Reform



Making Welfare Work

Message from the Premier iii

Foreword iv

Keeping our commitment to reform the welfare system . . iv

Why Welfare Had to Change 1

Five years ago, Ontario's welfare system was out of control 1

Welfare had become a way of life - good people were stuck in a bad system 2

Taxpayers were concerned about fairness, fraud and abuse 3

People with disabilities needed their own program 4

Social assistance programs needed a new direction 4

We Started by Getting Welfare under Control . . . 5

Small changes would not solve the problem 5

Taking the first steps in welfare reform 5

Putting a stop to the worst abuses 6

We're Cracking Down on Welfare Fraud 7

Making it easier for people to report suspected welfare fraud 7

Stopping people from "double-dipping" 7

Making sure that people in jail do not get welfare 7

Hiring more special staff to investigate welfare fraud allegations 8

Our crackdown on welfare fraud is getting results 8

Doing better at stopping welfare fraud 9

Ontario's new zero tolerance policy for those convicted of welfare fraud 10

We're Cutting the Red Tape and Working More Efficiently 11

The welfare system was out of date 11

Creating more efficient and effective business processes . . 11

Ontario Works Prepares People for Work 12

We're taking a completely new approach to welfare 12

Ontario Works is making a difference 13


Ontario Works is getting people ready for work 14

1. Practical help in finding a job 14

2. Community participation to build skills and valuable experience and make a contribution to society 15

3. Basic education 16

4. Job skills training 17



Making Welfare Work

5. Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) to break the cycle of dependency	17
6. Employment placement to find the jobs people need	18
7. Earnings incentives to help almost 60,000 people make the transition to work	19
Ontario Works is Working	20
Welfare rolls are down and taxpayers' savings are up . . .	20
Getting people out of the welfare trap	20
Individuals are turning their lives around	21
Despite the opportunities, some still refuse	22
We're Meeting the Needs of People with Disabilities	23
A new program moves people with disabilities off welfare	23
Creating a program for people with disabilities by listening to people with disabilities	23
Helping people with disabilities who can and do want to work	24
Welfare Reform and the Growing Ontario Economy Are Helping People Succeed	25
Record-breaking job creation	25
People on welfare are benefiting from the booming economy	26
A tale of two recoveries	26
We're Building on Our Success and Expanding Welfare-to-Work	28
There will be more opportunities for placements with community organizations and employers	28
The Welfare-to-Work Action Plan will double the number of placements	29
Making Ontario Works even better	30
We'll teach people to read and write	30
We'll help people get off drugs	30
We'll invest in training welfare caseworkers	30
Conclusion	31
Ontario Works is helping turn welfare cheques into pay cheques	31
Appendices	32

When our team took office in 1995, we set out to fundamentally reform a welfare system that wasn't helping people who were truly in need. More than 1.3 million people in our province were on welfare, and whole families were trapped in a system that offered no hope and few opportunities.

We thought the people and taxpayers of Ontario deserved better, so we promised to reform welfare. We introduced a mandatory work-for-welfare program, cracked down on fraud, adjusted benefits, and made sure the system was there for those who - through no fault of their own - were down on their luck and needed a helping hand.

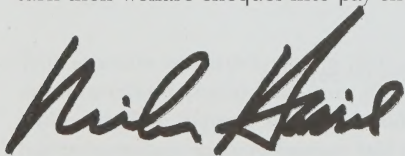
We kept our promise to the people of Ontario by turning welfare into a hand-up instead of a hand-out.

Today, on the fifth anniversary of the election of our government, more than half a million people have escaped the cycle of welfare dependency. Many have found the dignity that comes with a job and are looking forward to a brighter future for them, and for their children. As Premier, their success makes me very proud.

Together, we've accomplished a great deal. But there are still too many people on welfare in Ontario, and we need to do more to help them get their lives back on track. That's why we're expanding work-for-welfare, with extra help for people who need to learn to read and write. We will also introduce mandatory treatment for those who are addicted to drugs, and will provide more opportunities for those needing on-the-job experience.

Our welfare reforms have already transformed the lives of 500,000 men, women, and children in Ontario. By working together with the people of our great province, we will help even more people turn their welfare cheques into pay cheques.

Message From the Premier



Mike Harris, MPP
Premier of Ontario

Foreword

Keeping our commitment to reform the welfare system

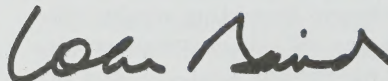
One of the key commitments of the Common Sense Revolution was a promise to reform Ontario's welfare system. Last month, we achieved a major milestone on the road to making welfare work:

- As of May 2000, **more than 500,000** Ontarians have stopped relying on welfare since 1995.
- People are **finding work** in the buoyant Ontario economy, which has created 703,000 new jobs since September of 1995.
- **Taxpayers' savings** resulting from welfare reform over the past five years now total over \$8 billion.

These successes were no accident. They happened because the Ontario government took the tough decisions necessary to transform welfare from a passive program into a mandatory welfare-to-work program for all able-bodied people.

In cutting taxes, reducing red tape and balancing the budget, we rebuilt the links to hope, opportunity, jobs and growth. As a result, the Ontario economy has been creating the jobs people need to escape the welfare trap and become self-sufficient.

This *Report to Taxpayers* describes why welfare reform was needed and how **we have created a welfare system based on responsibility, accountability and fairness**



John Baird, MPP
Minister of Community and Social Services

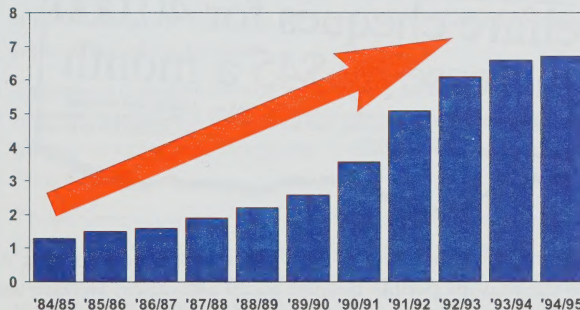
Five years ago, Ontario's welfare system was out of control

In 1995, when the government was first elected, the welfare system in Ontario was in crisis. Welfare had departed from its original purpose - temporary financial help while people are trying to get back to work:

- 1.3 million Ontarians were living on welfare.
- Ontario had the highest per capita welfare caseload in the country.
- Annual welfare costs had risen 423 per cent in just ten years - from \$1.3 billion in 1985 to \$6.8 billion in 1995.

Why Welfare Had to Change

Cost of Welfare in Billions of \$



Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

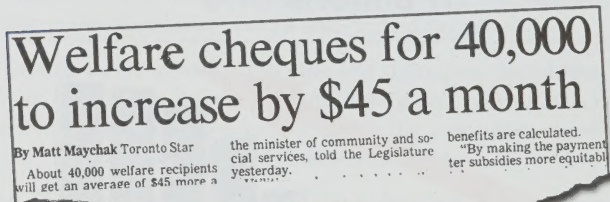
This situation was unacceptable. With all its advantages and opportunities, Ontario must have more to offer its people than endless welfare dependency. We could not stand by and accept this tremendous waste of human and financial resources. 1.3 million people on welfare wanted - and deserved - the dignity that comes with a job.

Why Welfare Had to Change

Welfare had become a way of life - good people were stuck in a bad system

Ontario's welfare problem had been getting worse for a long time. While this province gained nearly a million net new jobs in the 1980s, welfare dependency continued to rise. When we searched for the reasons for this situation, they were easy to find:

- Previous governments had raised welfare payments to record levels. Instead of supporting self-sufficiency and self-reliance, we were encouraging people to depend on government when they lost a job or couldn't find work. More attention was being paid to recipients' entitlement to assistance rather than their need to take responsibility for their futures. As a result, the original purpose of welfare - short-term help - had been lost.



- To make matters worse, the welfare system was doing nothing to address the reasons people needed social assistance. Welfare was not much more than a system for handing out cheques. There were few incentives to go back to school, get training or look for work. The result was that we had a lot of good people stuck in a bad system that wasn't working for them. It just didn't make sense to pay people to sit at home.

Taxpayers were concerned about fairness, fraud and abuse

We also faced a major challenge in restoring the credibility of the welfare system with taxpayers. The people of Ontario were willing to help people in need, but they had some tough questions about the welfare system and how it operated:

- Taxpayers wondered why it seemed to be more attractive to be on welfare than to be working and paying taxes. They could not understand why the more we spent on welfare, the bigger our welfare problem became.
- Taxpayers questioned why we seemed to be providing greater help for people on welfare than for low-income wage earners, people working but struggling to make ends meet to provide for their families.
- There were growing concerns about welfare fraud and abuse. People wanted the system protected for those who truly needed it, but they also wanted the government to prevent taxpayers' money from being wasted.

Clearly, we faced a serious challenge of restoring both the credibility and accountability of the welfare system to the taxpayers of Ontario.

Police lay charge of welfare fraud

OSHAWA — A woman who allegedly failed to disclose her living arrangements with her children's father is facing a charge of welfare fraud involving \$97,234, Durham Regional Police say.

Why Welfare Had to Change

Why Welfare Had to Change

People with disabilities needed their own program

Under the old system, the only way people with disabilities could receive financial help was to be on welfare. For many years, people with disabilities had argued for a new approach to income and employment support. They said the existing system was demeaning and rigid and they were right. They said it was time for government to focus on the supports they required to participate fully in Ontario society.

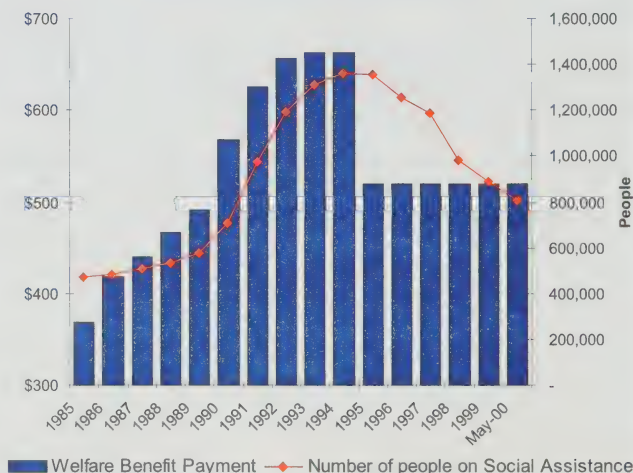
Social assistance programs needed a new direction

By the mid-1990s, Ontario's social assistance programs had remained virtually unchanged for more than 30 years. The system was outdated, cumbersome and costly. The old ways of thinking and working needed to be changed. We needed a new approach to managing the welfare system.

Welfare Payments and Dependency

Notes:

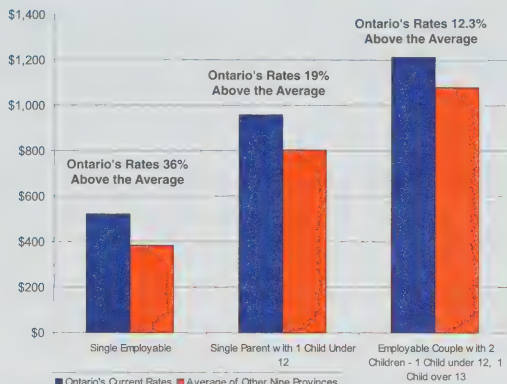
1. Number of people on social assistance includes recipients of Ontario Works Program (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Temporary Care Assistance (TCA) and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program.
2. Between June 1995 and May 2000, 507,177 people broke free of welfare dependency.
3. Welfare Benefit Payment is the maximum amount payable per month to a single employable person under Ontario Works/General Welfare Assistance from 1985 to 2000.



Source: Data from the Ministry of Community and Social Services



Ontario's Welfare Rates Compared to Other Provinces



Source: Welfare Incomes 1997 and 1998: A Report by the National Council of Welfare, Winter 1999-2000

**We
Started by
Getting
Welfare
under
Control**

Small changes would not solve the problem

In the past, many acknowledged that the welfare system wasn't working, and tinkering just made things worse. We decided we must meet these problems head-on, and begin fundamental reform of the welfare system.

Taking the first steps in welfare reform

When we began welfare reform, benefits were so generous that it paid more for people to stay at home, rather than get a job. We believed that people should be better off when they are working and that's why our welfare rates had to be adjusted. We simply had to make sure that Ontario's high welfare rates stopped being a disincentive to paid work.

In 1995, the Ontario government took the first real steps towards getting welfare under control:

- We reduced welfare rates by 21.6 per cent, and they are currently up to 36 per cent above the average of the other nine provinces.

We Started by Getting Welfare under Control

- We brought in the most generous "earnback" rules in the country, which enable welfare recipients to earn through employment the difference between the old welfare rates and the new rates without penalty.
- We set up a Welfare Fraud Hotline (1-800-394-7867) to catch people who would abuse the system and to prevent future welfare fraud.

Putting a stop to the worst abuses

We acted to reduce the most flagrant abuses right away by tightening the rules:

- We ended automatic welfare for 16- and 17-year olds. Instead we're making sure that all 16- or 17-year olds are in school as a condition of receiving welfare. They must live in a setting that is conducive to meeting their education requirement and they must be in regular contact with a responsible adult.
- We changed the rules for people living in a common-law spousal relationship to make sure that they are not better off than their married counterparts. It just makes sense that the welfare system looks at the assets and income of both individuals in that relationship when determining the amount of welfare they can receive. No one deserves higher benefits just because they are not married.

Welfare changes making a difference

By Kathleen Hay
Standard-Freeholder
CORNWALL.

Declining welfare rolls through new community initiatives are making a difference in more ways than just economics, says Ontario Works supervisor, Kathleen Hay.

"We have a far more active, helping system now," said Kathleen Hay, who supervises the area throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, in

that community placements can be seen as a stepping-

stone. "They're learning that people want them, while they're developing these skills.

"Many of them, who were reluctant
"We have a far more active.

"But it's not that way anymore. We can help them find a job, or a better job."

There is a caseload of 8,243 clients receiving benefits.

Approximately 300 clients are volunteering up to 70 hours per month with 107 local non-profit organizations through community placements.



We're Cracking Down on Welfare Fraud

In 1995, welfare fraud and misuse were seriously harming the credibility of Ontario's welfare system. We decided we had to act to protect the system for people who truly need help and to restore its integrity with taxpayers.

We have worked hard to respond to Ontarians' real concerns about welfare fraud, taking concrete steps to ensure that taxpayers' money is not wasted.

Making it easier for people to report suspected welfare fraud

We started by establishing the Welfare Fraud Hotline (1-800-394-7867), a number for people to call to report cases of suspected fraud.


We established a province-wide Welfare Fraud Control Database to track complaints and monitor the results of welfare fraud investigations.

Stopping people from "double-dipping"

We established information-sharing agreements with the federal government, other provinces and ministries to help combat welfare fraud. These agreements help us to stop individuals from "double-dipping," such as receiving welfare from Ontario and another province at the same time.

Making sure that people in jail do not get welfare

By collaborating with the Ministry of Correctional Services, the government is making sure that people in jail do not receive welfare. In 1998-1999 we caught over 5,700 cases where individuals were illegally collecting welfare while in jail.



We're Cracking Down on Welfare Fraud

Hiring more special staff to investigate welfare fraud allegations

We expanded the powers of special staff to investigate welfare fraud, and made it possible to suspend welfare for those convicted of welfare fraud.

The government is adding to the 300 provincial and municipal staff who investigate allegations of fraud. We are providing additional funding for up to 100 more staff to do this work.

Our crackdown on welfare fraud is getting results

In the last two years alone, our crackdown on welfare fraud and increased vigilance have resulted in significant savings for Ontario taxpayers:

- We've identified \$123 million in welfare payments that people were not entitled to receive.
- We've saved Ontario taxpayers \$75 million in avoided future costs.
- We've reduced or terminated benefits in 31,700 cases.
- We've obtained 1,870 fraud convictions.

Results of Welfare Fraud Crackdown

	1997-98	1998-99
Fraud convictions	1,123	747
Cases where assistance reduced/terminated	14,800	16,900
Value of payments people were not entitled to receive	\$63 million	\$60 million
Taxpayer savings in avoided future costs	\$37 million	\$38 million



We're Cracking Down on Welfare Fraud

Doing better at stopping welfare fraud

We have a new standardized way to check ongoing eligibility for financial assistance, part of the government's effort to streamline business processes and develop the technology necessary to support welfare reform.

The Consolidated Verification Process (CVP) is the new verification and review process for social assistance cases. It helps weed out fraud and makes sure that the right people get the right amount of money at the right time. By ensuring that only people entitled to assistance are receiving it, we are reducing social assistance program costs and caseloads.

We just keep uncovering more fraudulent claims:

- An individual collecting social assistance was also making monthly payments - in excess of his welfare cheque - on an active "gold" credit card.
- Someone claiming welfare in one city while he was actually living and working in another city.
- An individual collecting welfare was found to be receiving income from five other sources at the same time, including federal employment insurance and income from paying jobs.
- Someone was on welfare but actually running his own "cash only" business.

We're Cracking Down on Welfare Fraud

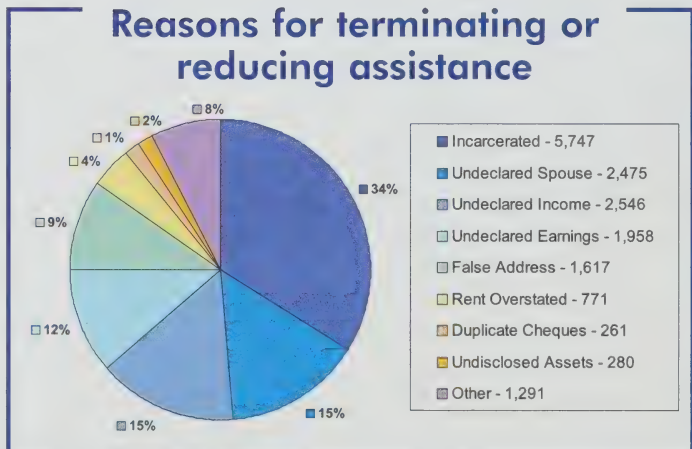
- A person claiming to be a single parent was actually still married and living with her spouse who was employed full time.

Our efforts are paying off for the taxpayer:

- To date, CVP alone has resulted in over \$60 million in savings.
- New processes for reporting income earned by people on welfare have created more than \$40 million in savings so far.
- When the new systems are fully in place, the taxpayer savings will be up to \$200 million a year, every year.

Ontario's new zero tolerance policy for those convicted of welfare fraud

Now we've taken another step to preserve the integrity of the system and safeguard taxpayers' dollars. Effective April 1, 2000, those convicted in court of welfare fraud for offenses committed on or after that date will be permanently ineligible for future social assistance.



Source: Welfare Fraud Control Report 1998-99

Workfare working well in Sudbury, say regional officials

Controversial program is helping welfare

vided 150 different ventures where Ontario Works recipients could gain valuable skills, and good references, he added.

**We're
Cutting
the Red
Tape and
Working
More
Efficiently**

The welfare system was out of date

The old welfare system we inherited had not been updated for more than 30 years. It was slow and costly. The lack of modern technology made it difficult to prevent fraud and catch those who would abuse the system. Caseworkers were forced to spend more time filling out forms and chasing paper than working with people to help them get off welfare.

Creating more efficient and effective business processes

We decided we had to build an efficient and effective welfare system based on modern business practices. So we're working closely with our municipal partners to reduce costs and find smarter ways of working:

- All welfare applications are now reviewed in a consistent way across the province to ensure that people receive accurate benefit amounts.
- A common information base is reducing paperwork. It will help keep better track of case files and help prevent fraud. It will stop people from claiming welfare as a single person in one town and claiming as part of a couple in another.
- These improvements are freeing up caseworkers to spend less time on administration. That means they can spend more time helping welfare recipients break free from the system and into a paid job.

Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

The initial controls we placed on the system were important, but they were just a down-payment on real reform. We recognized that the old system could not simply be adjusted. We needed a radical new approach to welfare in Ontario.

In 1996, we began phasing in an entirely new welfare-to-work program – Ontario Works – across the province. By the end of 1997, all municipal delivery agents had implemented the program. The new *Ontario Works Act* became law on May 1, 1998.

Welfare rolling down in Ontario

MPP: Decline 24th straight

By JAMES WALLACE
Queen's Park Bureau

TORONTO — Ontario's welfare rolls dipped for
social service.

We're taking a completely new approach to welfare

Ontario Works is the new way of delivering welfare and employment services in Ontario. It's a practical way of delivering social assistance and employment services to able-bodied people in financial need.

Ontario Works has three objectives:

- Ensuring that people on welfare take responsibility for finding work and becoming self-sufficient.
- Providing an effective transition to employment.
- Making welfare fair for people who need help and for the taxpayers who pay the cost.



Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

Ontario's new welfare system is based on several key principles:

- **Welfare is temporary, not permanent.** Welfare is a program of last resort. It provides short-term financial assistance to those most in need while they participate in activities leading to paid employment.
- **Doing nothing on welfare is no longer an option.** Participation is not just an expectation, but a requirement. In order to receive financial assistance, people on welfare must contribute to their communities, learn, train, or find work. Participation is mandatory for all able-bodied people, including sole-support parents with school-aged children.
- **The new system is based on mutual accountability and responsibility.** Municipalities are required to provide a balanced program of employment supports. Welfare recipients must participate in those activities that will speed their progress towards employment.

Ontario Works is making a difference

Here's how the program works. Eligibility to receive welfare is based on an assessment of financial need and the recipient's agreement to participate in employment activities:

- Financial need is determined according to family size, income, assets and shelter costs, and is updated as circumstances change.
- If the applicant meets eligibility requirements, financial assistance is issued - by cheque, direct deposit to a bank account or to a trustee.
- Participation expectations are laid out in an agreement, which is signed by each individual applicant and updated as activities are completed or modified.
- The agreement includes a plan to take part in employment assistance activities that support the individual's shortest route to a job.
- People may have their participation requirements deferred for specific reasons, such as being a sole support parent whose child is too young to attend school, caring for a disabled parent, or illness.
- If applicants at any time refuse to honour their commitments, their financial assistance may be reduced or terminated.

Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

Workfare booming

By JAMES WALLACE
Queen's Park Bureau
Ontario's Tory government has almost hit the turnaround target set for its troubled work-for-welfare program, figures show.
Toronto Sun

Participation rates nearing target: Tories

There are 36 welfare clients working in Baird's ministry; nine in management board; four in the ministry of labour; three in U

20,000 working for municipalities and community groups. Part of Baird's promise last fall was to expand workfare in the pro-

to deal with the "dramatic" hike in the length of time people stay on welfare. Despite a nearly 50% drop in Ontario's unemployment rate, the

Ontario Works is getting people ready for work

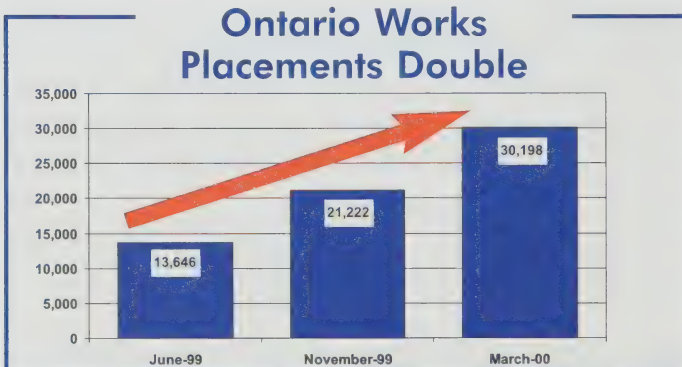
The starting point for Ontario Works is what people need to become employed. Some participants need to update or upgrade their skills. Some need to complete their basic education or training for a particular job. Others simply need help in finding a job and staying employed.

Ontario Works addresses each of these needs through a range of employment activities.

1. Practical help in finding a job

Ontario Works provides a flexible range of practical services and supports to help participants while they are actively looking for a job, including:

- Information on local job conditions and available local resources, such as education and training opportunities, employment counselling centres, Job Connect and help in accessing these resources.



Numbers include carry over and municipal adjustments.



Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

- Help in identifying skills and experience, finding out about local companies with job openings, workshops on how to look for work, letter writing, interview preparation, self-employment opportunities, and how to present in an interview and be successful on the job.
- Advice from staff and access to equipment and services to support job search, including use of telephones, faxes, photocopiers, computers, job boards and computerized job banks.

2. Community participation to build skills and valuable experience and make a contribution to society

The community participation requirement involves activities that contribute to the community. They can work up to 17 hours a week, for up to six months, in a placement position in any not-for-profit or public workplace.


We know that getting a job is easier if you have current work experience and recent references. Community placements are filling these gaps for people on welfare. They help participants build connections to the job market by providing them with:

- Current practical work experience
- Updated and new job skills
- Improved confidence in their abilities
- Up-to-date job references
- Contacts with potential future employers

Community placements can be set up in two different ways:

- Community groups, public and non-profit organizations can develop ideas for placements and propose them to the municipality.
- Participants can also develop their own ideas for community placements and have them approved by the municipalities.

Community placements may not displace any paid employment in the agencies where they are located. This means that community placements may not replace work done by a paid employee within the past two years.



Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

Community placements are a community effort - a partnership among the municipality delivering the Ontario Works program, the non-profit organizations that sponsor community placements and the people who participate in them.

We know that community placements are a stepping stone, not a destination. People on welfare may not be starting at the top of the employment pyramid; however, they are welcoming the opportunity to be involved in something that lets them develop valuable skills, gain experience and contribute to their communities.

“Our staff, community agencies and participants have worked together to make Simcoe County's workfare community placement program a win-win situation for all. We are very pleased with the benefits many of our clients receive from participation in this program. In particular, a number of our sole-support parents have increased self-esteem and have been successful in securing paid employment.”

Terry Talon, Simcoe County Social Services Administrator

3. Basic education

Ontario Works screens participants and refers them to basic education and training in their local community.

We recognize that education can be an important factor to enable some people to make the transition to work. More and more jobs and employers demand higher levels of education, as well as good writing and math skills. People who lack basic skills have a more difficult time competing for and holding a job.

Through Ontario Works, basic education and training programs help people prepare to meet the demands of the workplace. These programs allow people to:

- Complete their secondary school education (Grade 12 or equivalency)
- Obtain academic prerequisites for entry into job skills training
- Improve their language skills in either English or French and
- Upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills



4. Job skills training

We know Ontario's strong economy is increasing the need for skilled workers. Through Ontario Works, participants can access the job skills training necessary to meet the changing needs of today's global economy:

- Ontario Works is helping people access training programs by referring participants to community colleges, private sector and community-based organizations for job specific skills training.
- Ontario Works helps participants get on-the-job training, often the best kind of training.

Training includes workplace skills and training placements, such as co-op training, occupational skills programs and special certificate courses, like basic computer applications, word processing, professional sales, and chainsaw and forklift operation.

Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

A brighter future

Forcing teen parents into school is a positive move

Teen moms want education

By Lindsay Scotton
For The Packet & Times

At this high school, reading

instruction on how to be a better parent will also be required. The province says the program is consistent with the gov-

Teen welfare plan just makes sense

Some child-care advocates critics of the Harris government are being far too quick to condemn Ontario's plan to require teenage mothers on

5. Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) to break the cycle of dependency

The purpose of LEAP is to help teen parents complete their education and to help them and their children avoid a lifetime on welfare.

LEAP is mandatory for 16- and 17-year-old parents on Ontario Works who have not completed high school. Single parents and couples aged 18 to 21 on welfare may participate in LEAP voluntarily if they have not completed high school. Teen parents who are not willing to participate in LEAP are not eligible to receive welfare benefits.

Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

- LEAP supports learning by requiring regular attendance by participants in an educational program leading to a high school diploma. Other supports include help with a second language, literacy or numeracy problems, as well as learning and other disabilities.
- LEAP supports earning by assisting in the development of employment skills through school co-op programs, youth apprenticeship and job shadowing, as well as part-time and summer employment.
- LEAP supports parenting and child development through group sessions, participation in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program, home visits, one-on-one coaching, mutual support networks, mentoring programs and drop-in centres.

“Quite honestly it is the most progressive program that I’ve seen in any category, any Ministry in a very long time.”

Chris Friel, Mayor, City of Brantford

6. Employment placement to find the jobs people need

The purpose of employment placement is to move Ontario Works participants into jobs as quickly as possible and to support participants interested in self-employment. Employment placement services include:

- Hiring assistance, screening and matching to provide employers with candidates for permanent employment. For example, job interviews can be conducted on behalf of employers.
- Follow-up human resource services to help keep people employed.
- Support for employers who provide on-the-job training, job coaching and additional supervision.
- Assistance with workplace safety insurance.

Ontario Works policies do not permit employers to take jobs away from current employees by replacing them with people on welfare, or filling vacancies that have resulted from layoffs.

Welfare reforms working: Baird

'Alternative is to pay people to sit at home

said that every placement, no matter if it's planting trees or helping out at a food bank, can be a positive

Ontario Works Prepares People for Work

7. Earnings incentives to help almost 60,000 people make the transition to work

For many welfare recipients, working part-time is often the important first step towards getting a full-time job. Ontario Works supports people in making that transition through earnings incentives. These allow participants to receive welfare until their earnings are enough to provide for themselves and their families without the assistance of welfare.

Participants are eligible for a number of exemptions that allow recipients to earn income and still receive assistance:

- Welfare recipients are allowed to earn back the difference between the old welfare rates and the new rates without penalty. In doing so, people on welfare can benefit from the country's most generous earnback provisions as they take steps to self sufficiency.
- Recipients can keep an additional percentage of what they earn through employment for up to two years.
- Recipients may also deduct from their earnings the costs of child care expenses necessary to support employment.

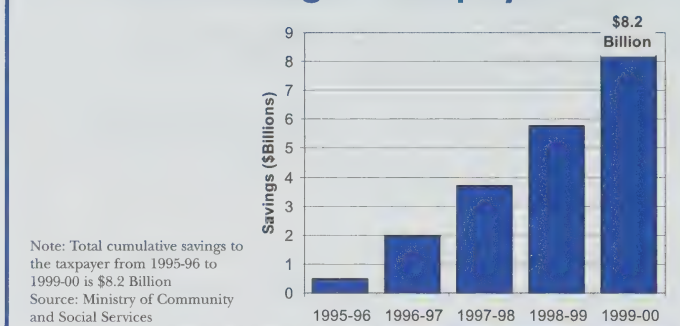
Last year almost 60,000 people on welfare were working in paid employment, mostly in part-time jobs.

The government is planning to spend over \$215 million in 2000-2001 in the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families, providing low- and modest-income families with up to \$1,100 for each child.

The government has announced an enhancement of this supplement with the introduction of a new benefit for working single parents. This change, which recognizes the special circumstances faced by single parents, will increase the current maximum annual benefit from \$1,100 to \$1,310 for each child under seven.

Ontario Works is Working

Total savings to taxpayers



Welfare rolls down - taxpayers' savings up

The evidence is in. More than 500,000 Ontarians have left welfare since we began our welfare reforms in 1995. That's saved Ontario's taxpayers more than \$8 billion in the past five years.

Getting people out of the welfare trap

Here's what people on welfare were doing last year to get out of the welfare trap:

- Just over 40,000 people were actively preparing themselves for a better future through basic education and job-specific skills training.
- More than 111,000 people took part in activities that provide practical help in finding a job, such as job search courses and information on the local job market.
- Over 30,000 people participated in community placements, which provide opportunities to acquire upgraded or new work skills, gain valuable experience, develop and build contacts. In the past year, the number of community placements has more than doubled, and the majority of municipalities have exceeded their annual placement targets.
- Over 12,000 people took part in employment placement, which helps job-ready participants find and keep employment, and also helps people start their own businesses.



Individuals are turning their lives around

We are hearing more and more Ontario Works success stories:

College graduate gets job after placement

Even with a completed computer course from a community college, a young Ontario Works participant could not get a job. He got valuable on-the-job experience through a community placement that required computer expertise. After four months in the placement, armed with college training and recent work experience, he got a job and is now employed full-time.

200 people hired

In one community, about 200 people got the job-skills training they needed - when they needed it - and were hired by a new employer in the community.

Training leads to job

One long-time welfare recipient went through a training course that addressed the specific barriers that had been standing between her and a job. As a direct result of the training she received, this participant is now working full time in a local business in her community.

Work with the elderly

An Ontario Works participant who had not worked for a number of years participated in a community placement working with the elderly. At the end of the placement, a job opportunity came up. She applied and was hired.

Confidence regained

Despite 11 years of work experience, one participant had been unable to obtain any employment for some time. A community placement gave the participant an opportunity to regain her confidence, while obtaining recent job-related experience and skills. It didn't take long for the participant to move into a clerical position in a local private sector company. She is now off welfare and working full time.

“You feel good about yourself because you’re actually working for the money you’re taking.”

Ontario Works Participant, North Bay

Ontario Works is Working

Ontario Works is Working

Welfare-to-work policy 'a good thing'

While the debate about Thunder Bay's ability to meet minimum targets for community placements rages on, one thing that is certain is the welfare-to-work action plan has been of benefit to some participants.

"Generally it's a good thing," says

Shlis. "With the hope that at the end of the placement there will be some type of employment potential there," says Shlis.

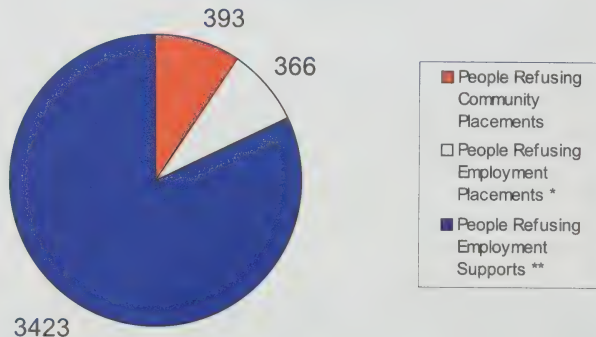
Shlis says that the program offers examples of how community placement can help them get off welfare.

person now," says Shlis. "Not that she wasn't before. She did lunchroom supervision at her daughters' school, was involved in her local church and was a caregiver for her aging mother and an elderly gentleman. All of which made her feel like a contributing member of society."

Despite the opportunities, some still refuse

The obligation to participate in welfare-to-work activities is serious, and it is enforced. In the past year, 4,182 people had their welfare payments terminated because they refused to take part in one or more of the program's mandatory activities.

4182 People Disqualified from Welfare for Refusing to Participate in Ontario Works 1999-2000



Total: 4,182 People Disqualified for Refusing to Participate in Ontario Works
Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

* Refused to take a paid job placement

** Refused to look for a job or participate in education and training activities

A new program moves people with disabilities off welfare

The government has brought in the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), fulfilling the promise to move people with disabilities off welfare by creating a separate program that better meets their unique needs.

Some key facts about ODSP:

- Ontario provides the highest level of disability support in Canada – up to 49 percent above the average of the other nine provinces.
- It moves people with disabilities off the welfare system where they never belonged.
- Funding for employment supports for people with disabilities that can and do want to work has been doubled from \$18 million to \$35 million.

Creating a program for people with disabilities by listening to people with disabilities

The government listened to people with disabilities in developing the supports and rules for ODSP:

- A definition of "disability" recognizes that people with disabilities can and do want to work.
- Income and asset rules are more generous.
- There is greater flexibility in allowing for family and community support.
- If a job does not work out, there are no financial penalties.
- The costs of disability are taken into account by making provisions for trusts, inheritances and coverage for disability-related expenses.

“What’s positive is the program’s recognition that people with disabilities have the desire and the ability to work.. The removal of the label permanently unemployable and the elimination of a financial penalty if attempts at employment fail are fundamental to persons with disabilities achieving independence.”

Mike Goodman, President, Ontario March of Dimes

**We're
Meeting
the Needs
of People
with
Disabilities**

We're Meeting the Needs of People with Disabilities

Helping people with disabilities who can and do want to work

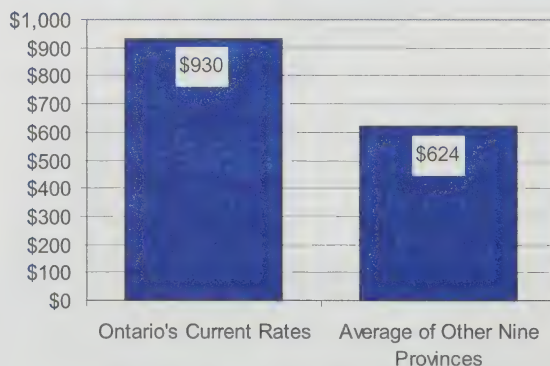
Many people with disabilities want to work and will work with the right kind of help.

ODSP employment supports help reduce and eliminate the barriers faced by people with disabilities when they look for a job. The program provides practical help in preparing for, getting and keeping a job:

- Help in developing an employment plan
- Employment preparation and training
- Help with job searches, job placement and job coaching
- Technical aids such as mobility devices, reading aids and adapted computers, as well as the training to use them

We listened to people with disabilities when we created ODSP and we're still listening. That's why ODSP's employment supports allow people with disabilities to choose the services they need to help them reach their individual employment goals.

Ontario's Social Assistance Rates for a Single Person with a Disability Compared to other Provinces



Ontario's Rates are 49.1% Above the Average

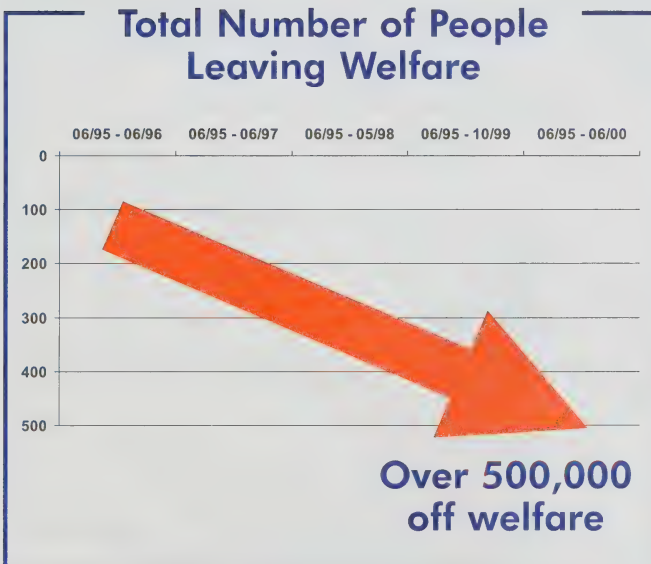
Source: Welfare Incomes 1997 and 1998: A Report by the National Council of Welfare, Winter 1999-2000

Record-breaking job creation

In 1995, the foundation of economic growth in Ontario was badly eroded. We acted to get Ontario back on track by cutting taxes, reducing red tape and passing balanced labour laws. As a result, hope, opportunity, jobs and growth are back in Ontario:

- The Ontario economy has created 703,000 new jobs since our government's first Throne Speech in 1995, 198,000 in the last year alone.
- Real economic growth in Ontario last year was 5.7 per cent, a faster growth rate than all of the G-7 countries.
- Ontario had a surplus last year and has had two balanced budgets in a row. The last year Ontario had back-to-back balanced budgets was in the early 1940s.

**Welfare
Reform
and the
Growing
Ontario
Economy
Are
Helping
People
Succeed**



Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

Welfare Reform and the Growing Ontario Economy Are Helping People Succeed

People on welfare are benefiting from the booming economy


This is good news for all Ontarians, but especially for people on welfare looking for work. Now there are job opportunities opening up every day. Ontario Works is providing the practical help people need to seize those opportunities and get their lives back on track.

A tale of two recoveries

During the economic recovery of 1985-90, while the Ontario economy was creating jobs, the number of people on welfare continued growing. Between 1995 and 2000, 703,000 new jobs have been created, and more than 500,000 people have left welfare.

How could two periods of economic recovery produce such different results? The answer is welfare reform.

By lowering welfare benefit rates to restore incentives to work, by cracking down on welfare fraud, by providing real help to welfare recipients and making welfare-to-work mandatory, welfare reform is breaking the cycle of dependency.



Welfare reform helps keep economy working

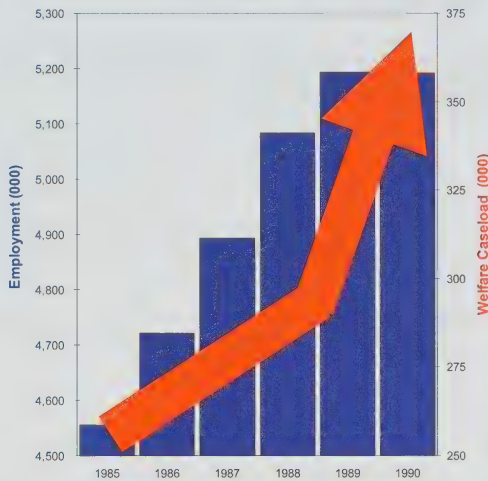
BY FRED McMAHON

his Labour Day, millions

Rural workers flooded into the cities in the post-war era, moderating wage pressures even when the econo-

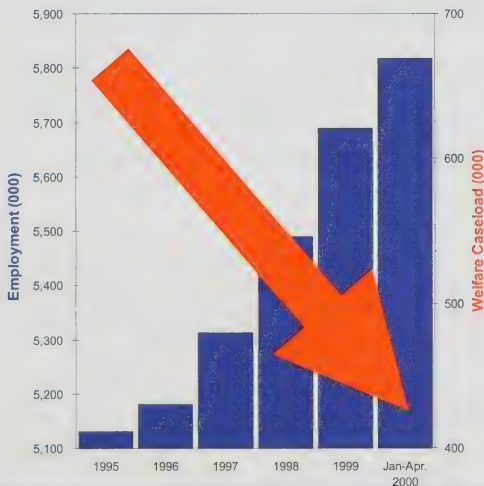


Jobs Up Welfare Up 1985-1990



Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

Jobs Up Welfare Down 1995-2000



Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

Welfare Reform and the Growing Ontario Economy Are Helping People Succeed

We're Building On Our Success and Expanding Welfare-to-Work

Welfare clients finding work

An average of 674 recipients per month stopped collecting assistance in 1999

sion introduced an enhanced job placement program to encourage the private sector to participate in the make-work initiative.

"It is enabling us to get into the private sector and market our clients to


Despite the accomplishments of welfare reform to date, Ontario still has more than 500,000 people receiving welfare. During last year's election, we committed to expand welfare-to-work. Even one person who wants to work but is trapped in the welfare system is one too many.

There will be more opportunities for placements with community organizations and employers.

Welfare caseworkers and recipients tell us that community placements have proven highly effective in helping people on welfare build confidence and self esteem, acquire work skills, update their resumes, make contacts with future employers and get work.

Recipients and municipalities asked us to create more opportunities. They pointed to the record-breaking job creation in the private sector as a real opportunity for people on welfare. We listened to them and in 1999, we expanded placement opportunities with private sector employers.

The ministry is now working towards a streamlined system that incorporates both community placements and private sector employment placements. We need to make the transition from welfare to work easier, not more difficult.



The Welfare-to-Work Action Plan will double the number of placements

We've set a target of doubling the number of placements by 2002 so that more people on welfare will have the opportunity to participate and benefit from a placement.

Our first step was the announcement of a Welfare-to-Work Action Plan:

- We established a Ontario Works Placement Secretariat to help develop more community placements and promote placements at the provincial level. The Secretariat is working closely with Ontario Works programs across the province to develop, market and implement new placement development projects.
- We are providing financial support through the Ontario Works Placement Innovation Fund. To date municipalities have submitted over 100 new and innovative projects to increase opportunities for Ontario Works participants. These include: maintaining and clearing trails; renovating youth centres, theatres and activity parks; assisting with senior's indoor and outdoor recreational activities; Meals on Wheels; establishing and maintaining community gardens; Environmental Community Opportunities (ECO) projects in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- We are increasing funding to municipalities that exceed their placement targets, and holding money back from those that fall short of their agreed upon targets. Last year, 28 of 47 municipalities rose to the challenge, exceeding their 1999/2000 community placement targets and earning increased funding. These communities are not only helping people on welfare by creating placements, they are also bringing increased funding into their communities that they can use to meet local human service priorities.
- The Ontario Public Service (OPS) will demonstrate leadership in increasing the number of community placement opportunities that are available within the OPS. Provincial ministries will have an important role to play in expanding the number of placements.

**We're
Building
On Our
Success
and
Expanding
Welfare-
To-Work**

We're Building On Our Success and Expanding Welfare-To-Work

Making Ontario Works even better

With over 500,000 people left on welfare, we still have more to do. Here's our plan for what we're going to do next.

We'll teach people to read and write

Many people can't find work because they lack the basic skills that everyone needs nowadays. We will therefore be providing remedial training in math, reading and writing, to make sure people have the skills they need to get good jobs and stay employed. This training will be mandatory for all non-learning disabled participants who need it to help ensure they are job-ready.

We'll help people escape addiction

It can be tough to get and keep a job if you're addicted to drugs. So we'll be coming forward with a plan to provide mandatory drug treatment for welfare recipients who are addicted to drugs. Those participants who refuse treatment will be ineligible for assistance.

We'll invest in training welfare caseworkers

Our welfare reforms are freeing welfare caseworkers to devote more time to offering practical help to people who need it. That's where they can make the biggest difference. Our government will ensure caseworkers have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively. So we will be investing in training to ensure that staff on the front lines are able to deal with the hard to serve cases, training caseworkers for the new focus of their profession - helping move people from welfare to work.

Some argue with the Tory approach to welfare, but it is achieving its goal

for their first child and \$120 that no one on welfare gets less



Ontario Works is turning welfare cheques into pay cheques

In the past, many people believed that the right to welfare was more important than the right to hope. They were wrong.

Ontario's welfare reforms have been working to turn people's lives around. We've created a new welfare system based on responsibility, accountability and fairness to taxpayers.

The results of our reforms prove the cycle of dependency can be broken if welfare offers more than a cheque. If they receive practical help, backed by an obligation to make an effort, people on welfare will take responsibility. They'll go back to school, learn new skills, look for work and find jobs. They'll get off the bench and back into the game.

Since 1995, half a million people seized the opportunities offered by welfare reform. Many have found the pride and the sense of accomplishment that comes with a job. They are working and building a brighter future for themselves and their families. And many others are taking the necessary steps towards self-sufficiency. They are finishing their education, updating old skills, learning new skills and gaining practical experience.

We've made a good start, but we're not finished yet. We've committed to expanding welfare-to-work. We want every welfare recipient to have the dignity that comes with exchanging a welfare cheque for a pay cheque.

Conclusion

Ontario's Welfare Caseload Decline by Municipal Delivery Agent, April 2000

Area Served	Welfare Cases Jun-95	Welfare Cases Apr-00	Change over June 1995	
			Cases	%
1 Dufferin	1,202	273	-929	-77.3
2 Halton	5,605	1,488	-4,117	-73.5
3 Guelph, Wellington	4,377	1,353	-3,024	-69.1
4 Muskoka	2,014	664	-1,350	-67.0
5 Algoma District	3,096	1,051	-2,045	-66.0
6 Stratford, St. Mary's, Perth	1,324	479	-845	-63.8
7 Peel	22,515	8,156	-14,359	-63.8
8 York	10,751	3,896	-6,855	-63.8
9 Durham	18,245	6,643	-11,602	-63.6
10 Northumberland	2,587	965	-1,622	-62.7
11 Barrie, Orillia, Simcoe	11,700	4,525	-7,175	-61.3
12 Brant , Brantford	5,354	2,125	-3,229	-60.3
13 Niagara	20,038	7,998	-12,040	-60.1
14 Haldimand-Norfolk	2,859	1,164	-1,695	-59.3
15 Owen Sound, Grey	3,004	1,228	-1,776	-59.1
16 Rainy River District	636	271	-365	-57.4
17 Oxford	3,435	1,468	-1,967	-57.3
18 Bruce	1,777	770	-1,007	-56.7
19 Peterborough, Peterborough County	7,245	3,171	-4,074	-56.2
20 Lennox and Addington , Prince Edward	2,621	1,151	-1,470	-56.1
21 Huron	1,227	540	-687	-56.0
22 Sudbury	11,828	5,270	-6,558	-55.4
23 Thunder Bay District	6,628	2,991	-3,637	-54.9
24 Smith Falls, Lanark	2,390	1,087	-1,303	-54.5
25 Prescott and Russell	3,346	1,536	-1,810	-54.1
26 Pembroke, Renfrew	3,294	1,515	-1,779	-54.0
27 Waterloo	17,901	8,264	-9,637	-53.8
28 Parry Sound District	1,917	885	-1,032	-53.8
29 Toronto	149,196	71,012	-78,184	-52.4
30 Lambton	5,098	2,435	-2,663	-52.2
31 Timiskaming District	1,556	762	-794	-51.0
32 London, Middlesex	21,097	10,509	-10,588	-50.2
33 Haliburton , Victoria	3,573	1,802	-1,771	-49.6
34 Windsor, Essex	12,890	6,514	-6,376	-49.5
35 Ottawa-Carleton	44,559	22,530	-22,029	-49.4
36 Chatham-Kent	4,928	2,493	-2,435	-49.4
37 Belleville, Quinte West, Hastings	7,801	3,981	-3,820	-49.0
38 Nipissing District	4,690	2,394	-2,296	-49.0
39 Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	5,991	3,160	-2,831	-47.3
40 Brockville, Gananoque, Leeds and Grenville	3,843	2,070	-1,773	-46.1
41 Hamilton-Wentworth	23,868	12,883	-10,985	-46.0
42 Sault Ste. Marie, Prince TWP and Sault North Planning Board	6,425	3,520	-2,905	-45.2
43 Kingston, Frontenac	7,940	4,476	-3,464	-43.6
44 St. Thomas, Elgin	2,486	1,414	-1,072	-43.1
45 Cochrane District	4,203	2,577	-1,626	-38.7
46 Kenora District, excluding areas north of 11th Baseline	1,341	980	-361	-26.9
47 Manitoulin District, Sudbury District	941	866	-75	-8.0

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

Note:

- Ontario's overall welfare caseload (OW) decline from June 1995 to April 2000 is 52.2%.

- Data include Territories without Municipal Organizations but do NOT include First Nations.

Ontario Works Placements by Municipal Delivery Agent, March 2000

Area Served	Caseload with Mandatory Requirements (Average October - December 1998) *	Minimum Provincial Targets 1999/2000 (15% of Caseload with Mandatory Requirements)	Cumulative Activity	Percentage of Minimum Provincial		Increased Funding
				Target	Rank	
Bruce	482	72	355	493%	1	\$283,000
Kenora District excl. areas north of 11th Baseline	815	122	565	463%	2	\$443,000
Timiskaming District	534	80	293	366%	3	\$213,000
Lennox and Addington, Prince Edward	993	149	532	357%	4	\$383,000
Algoma District	800	120	408	340%	5	\$288,000
Dufferin	243	36	104	289%	6	\$68,000
Huron	336	50	143	286%	7	\$93,000
York	3,465	520	1,482	285%	8	\$962,000
Owen Sound, Grey	1,002	150	410	273%	9	\$260,000
Chatham - Kent	1,714	257	690	268%	10	\$433,000
Northumberland	769	115	292	254%	11	\$177,000
Parry Sound District	835	125	280	224%	12	\$155,000
Cochrane District	2,543	381	751	197%	13	\$370,000
Muskoka	488	73	142	195%	14	\$69,000
Nipissing District	1,564	235	457	194%	15	\$222,000
Peterborough, Peterborough County	2,684	403	776	193%	16	\$373,000
St. Thomas, Elgin	942	141	267	189%	17	\$126,000
Lambton	1,970	296	544	184%	18	\$248,000
Rainy River District	199	30	55	183%	19	\$25,000
Halton	1,238	186	310	167%	20	\$124,000
Peel	6,651	998	1,664	167%	20	\$666,000
Brockville, Gananogue, Leeds and Grenville	1,946	292	484	166%	21	\$192,000
Pembroke, Renfrew	1,014	152	227	149%	22	\$75,000
Kingston, Frontenac	3,552	533	657	123%	23	\$124,000
Hastings, Belleville, Quinte West	3,644	547	654	120%	24	\$107,000
Stratford, St. Mary's, Perth	327	49	55	112%	25	\$6,000
Sudbury	4,647	697	760	109%	26	\$63,000
Toronto	67,696	10,154	10,776	106%	27	\$622,000
Barrie, Orillia, Simcoe	3,115	467	460	99%	28	\$0
Sault Ste. Marie, Prince TWP, Sault North Planning Bd	2,753	413	330	80%	29	\$0
Smith Falls, Lanark	1,196	179	131	73%	30	\$0
Haliburton, Victoria	1,564	235	171	73%	30	\$0
Hamilton - Wentworth	9,483	1,422	1,026	72%	31	\$0
Brant, Brantford	1,305	196	140	71%	32	\$0
Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	2,834	425	285	67%	33	\$0
Thunder Bay District	2,288	343	231	67%	33	\$0
Oxford	1,351	203	129	64%	34	\$0
Waterloo	7,116	1,067	626	59%	35	\$0
Prescott and Russell	2,202	330	189	57%	36	\$0
Guelph, Wellington	1,139	171	83	49%	37	\$0
Manitoulin District, Sudbury District	620	93	45	48%	38	\$0
Durham	5,391	809	376	46%	39	\$0
Windsor, Essex	5,047	757	241	32%	40	\$0
Haldimand - Norfolk	1,042	156	44	28%	41	\$0
London, Middlesex	10,640	1,596	438	27%	42	\$0
Ottawa-Carleton	22,732	3,410	918	27%	42	\$0
Niagara	6,011	902	202	22%	43	\$0
	200,922	30,137	30,198	100%		\$7,170,000

* Some caseload shifts have occurred based on reconciliation post municipal consolidation.



Contact

For more information on the government's welfare reform, please check our Internet website: <http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS>, or call the Ministry of Community and Social Services Infoline: 1-888-789-4199.

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